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MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM G. HAAN

THE DIVISION AS A FIGHTING MACHINE

BY
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THE DIVISION AS A FIGHTING MACHINE

WHAT IT IS, HOW PREPARED FROM ITS INCEPTION
TO ITS ACTION IN BATTLE, AND ITS TROUBLES
AND PLEASURES IN ITS HARDEST DAY'S
FIGHT, FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE
DIVISION COMMANDER

MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM G. HAAN

It is my purpose to show in this paper, very briefly, the outlines of a division organization, the theory of its training, in general what it is composed of; to present a very brief outline, also, of its early experience in training and in action; and finally to give as accurate a picture as I can of its supreme test when after many days' fighting it was called upon to do in a single thrust a task which in its overpowering magnitude well-nigh unnerved its commander.

This day was the fourteenth of October, 1918, when the Thirty-second Division was called upon to assault, capture, and pass over the last organized line of the famous Hindenburg position, in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. This line included the high and strongly held position south of the village of Romagne and extended through the heights known as La Cote Dame Marie. A description of this position will be given later.

First, then, let us go back and look for a moment upon the Division as it was organized from the troops of Wisconsin and Michigan in Texas, where many new units had to be formed and where none of the old units fitted. A complete reorganization had to be made. All of this was accomplished with the loyal support of the senior officers and subordinate officers, who must have felt very keenly seeing their old organizations with which they had been serving for many months thus disrupted for the purpose of making a fighting unit on modern lines. To the credit of all these officers and

men let it be said that no complaint ever reached the Division Commander; let it be further said that the brigade commanders and regimental commanders with whom I had occasion daily to confer showed only a spirit of wishing to help make a fighting unit.

We shall pass by these early stages, merely remarking that while the reorganization was going on the training did not stop. The full seven hours of training went on daily on the drill grounds, on the ranges, on the bayonet courses, in the schools, and everywhere, while in the office the staff was patiently working on reorganization under a policy adopted by the Division Commander after full consultation and agreement with the brigade commanders.

One word here in regard to training: From the beginning it was one of my principle functions to keep before the eyes and minds of the officers and men the fact that the Thirty-second Division was going to fight; that all of our training must be conducted with that end constantly in view; and that only such officers should accompany the Division to France as by their physical fitness, their age, and their aptitude for commanding men in battle were considered fully qualified for leading against the enemy the splendid men of which the Division was to be composed.

For many years, in fact since its organization, the only kind of fighting for which the United States Army has been trained is the offensive. We have always believed that it is only offensive action that can win battles and wars; and under that theory it became the duty of the Division Commander at these early stages to visualize his division in future offensive action, in order that he could adopt a proper doctrine of training so as to instill into each man and each element which were finally to make up his fighting unit that kind of training which would make it of most use in a fighting machine in which offensive tactics were the *only tactics that were to be used in battle*.

Such visualization by the particular Division Commander in reference was a rather difficult procedure, as will be realized when it is remembered that the largest force he had ever commanded was only slightly in excess of the number of commissioned officers he now had in his command—still more difficult when it is remembered that the methods of warfare, the tactical operations that had taken place in this war had given somewhat of a setback to our theory of training for the offensive only. The difficulties of this situation were somewhat increased when we read in the first paragraph of training instructions issued from the Army War College the following expression: "Trench warfare is of paramount importance." Fortunately, before a system of trenches could be completed and much instruction given this particular paragraph in the War Department instructions was revoked, and we went back to our original theory of offensive tactics only. In this connection it may be interesting to note that as late as June 16, 1918, the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies issued elaborate instructions to all the allied armies as to how defensive warfare should be carried on to meet German attacks. I will not quote here all of that paper, but merely the last few sections, which show how the French Commander-in-Chief was thinking at that late date. He says:

In a word our command can prepare a defensive battle corresponding to the offensive method practiced by the enemy.

This method above all aims at disorganizing the command, not allowing it time to make judicious dispositions. The method will be outwitted if our command has laid out for itself in advance a line of rational conduct, if it has drawn up a program that is capable of as sure and rapid execution as possible, and if it then has a strength of purpose to hold to it by directing the battle at every moment.

This mastery of the command is communicated instantly to the troops. It is the challenge for the execution by these troops of the most difficult mission.

(Signed) F. FOCH

This was on June 16 when our Division was in the front line near Belfort—the very day on which I took over the

active tactical command of my own Division and the Ninth French Division. This was the first time an American officer had the honor of commanding a French Division.

Aside from what is above quoted, some elaborate instructions are contained in General Foch's paper showing that the front line elements, the outpost troops, must stay in their places and fight to the last man, with a view to breaking up the enemy's advancing lines so that our battle positions or the second line would be able to hold them completely. In transmitting these instructions to division and higher commanders, General Pershing added the following postscript to these instructions:—

Commanders will show by their attitude that they give full, loyal, and sympathetic support to the execution of the above instructions of the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies.

It is very evident that General Pershing, however, was not satisfied with this defensive attitude, for on July 11, 1918, he issued the following, both papers reaching division commanders on the same day:—

INSTRUCTIONS ON TACTICAL DISPOSITION

1. The ultimate purpose of the American Army is the decisive defeat of the enemy, and not the mere passive result of the pure defensive. To realize this ultimate purpose, it is essential that every officer and soldier of these forces be imbued with the offensive spirit.

Then General Pershing goes on to describe somewhat in detail the methods of preparing the troops in morale and in training. In fact, he lays down the doctrine of training to get the troops not only instructed correctly for the kind of fighting that he believes in, but to get them into the right frame of mind, the right kind of morale, the right kind of esprit de corps. These latter we found very important considerations during battle.

Perhaps these quotations may throw a little further light upon the statements made above that from the very beginning of training the commander must visualize the kind of

fighting his division will be called upon to do; otherwise he cannot adopt the correct "doctrine" of training the various elements.

One must now keep in mind that for the next seven or eight months there was daily work from morning until night under the guidance of the same idea, namely, to produce from a conglomeration of men, animals, and material a machine which would carry out in battle the single idea of a single mind, itself controlled by instructions from the higher command, making this smallest fighting unit of all arms, the division, in itself work as a single element in conjunction with hundreds of other similar elements that made up the great Allied Army, which again was finally controlled by a single mind. It is the ultimate in organization to make all elements of an army composed of some twenty different nationalities speaking different languages—some seven million men operating on half a dozen separate fronts—respond to the will of a single commander. This power of organization and the putting of it into effect won the war.

After four months of work and training and study and organization and reorganization in Texas it was a pleasure to find that when the order to move came the officers of the various grades in the Division had grasped many of their functions, and it was no longer necessary to lead them about and tell them what to do. They began to understand what was meant by orders. Nothing further need be said in regard to this first move of the Thirty-second Division than that each unit was ready to entrain at the place and time set by the schedule for the trains. Unfortunately, the train crews had not had the same kind of training and, in consequence, were never at the appointed place at the designated hour; and our Division straggled from Texas to New York, a glowing example of the inefficiency of our railroad service, of the very efficiency of which we had heard so much.

From twenty-four to forty-eight hours late upon arrival was the rule and not the exception for trains in New York; they were all late, without any exceptions.

A complete division is difficult to visualize. One must see it with all its armament, troops, and trains to begin to understand—infantry brigades, machine gun battalions, artillery, engineers, trench mortar battery, signal corps, ammunition trains, supply trains, sanitary trains, mobile repair shops, medical corps troops, field hospitals, ambulance companies, brigade staffs, division staff. In personnel 28,000, animals some 9,000, motor cars, motor trucks, tanks, balloons, air planes, and last but not least, the military police. In a single close column—men marching in column of fours well closed up—the division is now more than thirty miles long. It was a liberal education in military organization thus to see the First Division upon its return parade in New York and Washington with all its transportation, men, animals, and full campaign equipment. The division headquarters is the nerve center of the entire organization. It is the business center; and when the division has been trained for battle it promptly responds to the plans of its commander, promulgated in orders through the staff and system of communication.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the mortifying fact that upon our arrival in France early in March we were made temporarily a replacement and labor division, because we got out of that; and right glad were all the men in the Division when they heard that we were going to the front. Let us pass over this period merely by saying that as soon as we got our men together again our training started anew, and when we got on the front line our training continued with greater speed and with greater effectiveness, but always with the offensive spirit. The doctrine of training had that objective in view all the time.

While the Division was in Texas in training, we worked under our old staff system. Upon arrival in France, our staff officers were gradually taken away from us and new staff officers assigned. These new officers had had some training in the American Staff College in France, where they were studying the handling, equipping, and fighting of larger bodies of men than the world had ever before known. Gradually the staff work was taken over by the proper staff officers, thereby relieving the Commander in a greater and greater measure from details and permitting him to give more attention to his front line work and the combat preparation of his combat troops for front line work. I have estimated that while in Texas seventy per cent of the time of the Division Commander was required for administrative work. In June, six months later, when the Division was in the front line near Belfort, only ten per cent of his time was necessary for administrative work; and when finally the Division went into the big fight north of the Marne only about five per cent of his time was necessary; yet the functioning of everything was greatly superior to what it had been before.

When on the twenty-ninth of July our Division relieved the Third Division, then for the first time it became the duty of the Division Commander to make a plan of battle and of his staff to prepare the battle orders. Here, then, was to be put to the test whether or not our doctrine of training for fighting on the offensive had been correct—whether we were going to take the offensive in battle, or whether we were to remain on the defensive. Please note that the twenty-ninth of July, 1918, was only eighteen days after General Pershing issued his famous “Instructions on Tactical Disposition,” a part of which I have already quoted. I may remark here that while it was indeed gratifying to receive from our own Commander-in-Chief these instructions, they made no change in the

training that was going on in the Thirty-second Division. That Division had trained for offensive combat from the day it arrived in Camp MacArthur at Waco, Texas. It continued that kind of training during all of its training periods and it continued that kind of fighting up to November 11, when the fighting stopped.

I cannot say that I felt any anxiety whatever as to the outcome of the first battle of the Thirty-second Division. It was not a very great undertaking, although our gallant Third Division had made several attempts to take the position and each time had to withdraw. It was too exhausted after its heavy fighting in driving the enemy across the Marne and up the hills to the north of the river to make another great effort; but our fresh troops went forward as at drill, and never for a moment did I think that they would do anything else—never for a moment did it occur to me that they might fail in this first attempt. I felt sure that the kind of training they had received and the kind of men they were would guarantee success in the task that was given them. In this they fully justified every expectation. They took their objective by assault, organized it, and held it until they got orders to proceed to the next objective, and so on, and so on, and so on continuously until eight days later they had driven the enemy back nineteen kilometers and had captured the famous stronghold and railhead of Fismes and driven the enemy across the Vesle River. Then the Division was withdrawn and given a short period of ten days for reorganization and further training. Then it was given another task. Everything began to move more smoothly, and orders given by the Division Commander were immediately visualized by the corresponding movement of the elements of the Division called upon to move. Everywhere was order, and everything was done in an orderly manner; it was businesslike. The Division Commander's office, though not as a rule in a comfortable place,

was always characterized by a business spirit and business-like transaction of business. The Chief of Staff and his assistants had their offices—if they may be called offices—arranged always in an orderly manner; electric lights appeared as regularly as darkness came. And so the Division was developed into a fighting machine composed of all the elements necessary for carrying on combat.

After the Division had completed its second great battle with General Mangin's Tenth Army with the capture of Juvigny, a key point in the line, and approximately 1,000 prisoners and much material in the way of guns and ammunition, it was taken away and sent to our great First Army, with which it was finally to fight its greatest and last battle.

I fear it will be a difficult thing to give a description that will be anything like a reasonably accurate picture of what confronted the Division when it went into the front line near the famous town of Montfaucon, where the German Crown Prince had had his observation point to observe the German Army in its fighting and attacks on the Verdun positions. It is impossible to describe these conditions to one who has not been over the ground, I think, and make him realize quite what the situation there was. A Congressman traveling through these woods in attempting to describe what he saw remarked as follows:

I saw such spots where in the little forest American boys laid down their priceless lives—a little forest filled with tangled vines, and fallen trees, and jagged rocks, and little hidden fissures, and tangled vines, and fallen trees, and tumbled, jumbled saplings, and deep trenches, and concrete peepholes, and German dugouts, and interlaced branches—so that when we had followed the Captain who was our escort and who himself had fought in that fight—when we had followed him in and out, up and down, and over and under, I for one was utterly exhausted without any pack and without any burden of ammunition.

Let me say here that this Congressman passed through this little wood with a guide, not under fire, in the daytime, and at his leisure; let me say further that the Thirty-second Division passed through this wood on the night of Septem-

ber 28 in a cold downpour of rain, in the darkest night that I have ever seen, or rather felt, at a time when the only road or trail through No Man's Land, some three miles wide and through these little woods, was completely blocked with stalled vehicles so that the men had to pick their way alongside of the road, over tangled wire, in mud, and under fire of the enemy's artillery. Yet there were no complaints. The Division had become a fighting unit; the Division Commander was personally leading his Division through these tangled, jumbled saplings and trenches and wire, himself having reconnoitered the previous day the trail by which he was to lead his Division during this famous night to the relief of the Thirty-seventh Division, which had become exhausted and which had to be withdrawn from the line. The men marched all night with their 75-pound packs, arriving at the northern edge of the woods, a description of which has been attempted. At midnight I found the headquarters and the Commander of the Thirty-seventh Division and presented my orders for the relief of his Division. This was the first information he had that his Division was to be relieved, because metallic telephonic connection had been interrupted between his Division and the Corps Headquarters. The next day it continued to rain, and it continued to be cold, but, fortunately, it was also misty, so that during the daytime it was practicable to locate the elements of the Division we were to relieve; and it was also practicable during the daytime to relieve all but the front elements of the entire Division; during the early hours of the next night the remainder of the Division was relieved.

Therefore, on the first of October our Division was again crouching for another offensive. Its front elements were again in contact with the enemy on a line running east and west a few hundred meters south of the village of Cierges, the same name as the first village that the Division captured in its first battle. The evening of October 1 found our line

to the north of this Cierges No. 2 and the village in our possession.

I will not attempt a description of how the Division advanced from this initial position to its final jump-off line on the morning of October 14, except to say that every inch of this ground was fought over and fought for by the enemy, and that while the Division had no large pitched battles in gaining these five kilometers of ground, yet it had continuous fighting by most of its elements for a period of two weeks, during which our losses were approximately 4,000. It should be observed that this was mostly open ground and that the enemy was strongly intrenched on the heights to the south and west of Romagne, which was the position that had to be finally taken by assault.

When we had reached within about two thousand yards of this position, or perhaps a little more, a combined effort of all the divisions in our immediate vicinity was made to advance the entire line and if possible carry the strong position—the Kriemhilde Stellung. For this very careful preparation had been made, a careful plan had been drawn up, and the orders for the battle most carefully prepared in detail. A chart graphically representing the instructions given was distributed with the order, and I have heard from all regimental commanders and many others to the effect that this chart was a great assistance to them in maneuvering their units in accordance with the plans of the Division Commander, as expressed in the battle orders.

The advance was made as planned for a distance of about fifteen hundred meters—that is until the advance elements came practically in touch with the enemy's wire protecting the strong Kriemhilde line on the heights to the southwest of Romagne. In two places—one directly to the south of the village of Romagne and the other in the left center of the sector—did our troops succeed in penetrating this powerful position. The remainder of the line was held

up in front of the wire, and these penetrations had been so narrow and the forces going through so small that it was impossible for them to hold their positions; in consequence of this they were withdrawn.

I desire here for a moment to refer to the only serious error that was made during the entire fighting in transmitting information from the front line to the Division Commander. The battalion which had penetrated into the enemy's position in the left center of the sector sent word back that they had penetrated the enemy's line and had captured the strong position of La Cote Dame Marie. This position was the key point of the entire Kriemhilde line, which was the last organized and strongly-held line of the Hindenburg position. I had these reports briefly investigated and received confirmatory information to the effect that we occupied the key position, La Cote Dame Marie, and the entire trench position from that point to the right of the sector and I so reported to the higher command. It was mainly upon this information that the entire army received orders to attack along its whole front on the morning of October 14.

It was not until about noon of October 13, and after the order that a general attack would be made on the morning of the fourteenth had been received from the higher command, that I ascertained the real truth about the position of my front line. You can imagine, therefore, the state of my mind when I learned the cold facts that we had not captured the key position; that we did not occupy the strong position across the front of our sector which was covered by triple lines of barbed wire; that this position was still held by the enemy; and that our troops were still south of that position but close up to the wire. For just about five minutes, when the real facts became positively known to me—when the real facts had fully permeated my somewhat dazed brain that not only had I been misinformed but that I

in turn had misinformed the higher command as to my position in such an important place and at such a critical time—for about five minutes I suffered the greatest depression of my life. It was perhaps a fortunate circumstance that when I received this information I was alone except for my orderly, who was near by, and therefore I could not communicate any feelings of depression to my staff. When I had time to recover I called my Chief of Staff and told him that since we did not have the position we would have to take it and that we had no time to lose. The next morning the entire line was to advance in a great battle. Those instructions had already been received from the higher command. I made my plan—made it brief. I knew exactly how I wanted to attack the positions with the greatest possibility of success. After having completed that plan and having given some instructions to the Artillery Commander, I proceeded on a visit to my brigade and regimental commanders, leaving to my staff the preparation of the battle orders. I felt that now as never before, and perhaps as never again, would it be necessary to raise the morale of our troops to the very highest pitch, to make them believe that not only must the position be taken but that we must make them believe that we would take it—that we could take it; in fact, the offensive spirit had to be driven into the troops between noon and midnight of that day so that when the call came for them to advance at daylight the next morning nothing in front of them should stop them.

I reached my brigade commanders, who had their headquarters close together—so close that in a minute I could call them together and have a conference. I told them what was in my mind in regard to taking the position—that it was not a question of whether we could or could not, but that we would take it the next morning, and no one must discuss it in any other sense; that we would take that position and nothing else would do; we would not only take

the position, but would go on beyond and keep on going; and that they must assist me in putting such an offensive spirit into our troops before midnight of that night that nothing should stop them the next morning. I think I was fortunate in that while I was talking to my brigade commanders on that very point, General Summerall, the Corps Commander, who had been at my headquarters, and when he found that I had gone to see my brigade commanders had followed me, came into the conference as I was telling them what had to be done. His assistance in putting fighting spirit into the brigade commanders, their staffs, and the other officers that were there was very helpful. I think General Summerall has perhaps the power of inspiring men around him to a greater extent for battle than any other man I have known. I said a little while ago that for a few minutes I was probably more depressed than during any other period of my life. But when General Summerall got through talking, my spirits were jubilant; I no longer had a thought in my mind that we would not be successful; and the same idea could be seen permeating through all the officers who were present at that conference. It not only inspired them to believe that nothing could stop us, but it inspired them to tell their comrades the same thing and perhaps more—that the whole army was going forward and that nothing should stop the Thirty-second Division under any circumstances. And so the word went out; and the morale of the Division was raised to the highest pitch possible. Perhaps it was better that the period was so short; it spurred everybody on with anxiety mingled with excitement. They knew that they did not have to wait long. Word went out before midnight that night *just when* we were going over the top, at least as far down as it could safely be passed; all platoon commanders were informed; they doubtless told some of their most reliable noncommissioned officers. They knew how far the word could be passed

among their own little units and still be safe from the enemy. All of this had been brought about by training and experience. It was no longer necessary to say to a brigade commander, a regimental commander, or a battalion commander, or a company commander: "This information is confidential and must go no further." They had learned to know what information must be kept away from the very front elements. They had learned to take the initiative not only in fighting, but in thinking. They had learned the game of war in the front line. They had learned how to obey even though it be to go straight to their death.

And now let us stop for a moment and take a look as well as we can at the position the Division was facing—the post of command, the Division Commander, the position of the brigade commanders, the positions of the artillery, the positions of the ammunition supply and the food supply, the positions of the dressing stations and the field hospitals, and the lines of communication whereby the Division was kept alive by the activities of the service of supply, the road control, the stragglers' posts, and First Aid stations. I think one is liable to overlook in a large measure the activities back of the line, the complexities of which are little understood outside of the quiet hard workers who had this in charge. Nothing but perfect staff organization and well-nigh perfect cooperation between all the branches of supply can keep a division going, much less an army.

Standing on the heights of Montfaucon and looking to the north about five miles away could be clearly seen a well-defined ridge covered with forest towering some three hundred feet above and dominating the low intervening terrain, mostly open, rolling country, affording, apparently, little cover from view for advancing troops; cultivated fields without crops; small patches of scrub oak; several small low lying villages, huddled snugly in ravines with

their thin church steeples visible from all directions. On the evening of October 13 as I rode forward over this ground it looked from a distance almost peaceful, except for white puffs of smoke here and there indicating registration by the enemy artillery; but as I rode forward every ravine hidden from the view of the enemy's towering position showed activity. Guns were here and there in position; others were making ready for action; and as I moved further forward the surface of the ground which from a distance seemed calm and natural now showed a ghastly ruptured condition, torn and mangled by shells from the small pit of the 75 to the cellar-like craters made by the heaviest shells. Some of the craters were fifteen feet deep and thirty feet in diameter. The villages, which from a distance seemed still to have the semblance of habitation, were indeed but masses of ruins; among this tangled mass of frightful destruction were seen as if in peaceful slumber the dead bodies alike of friends and foes who had made the supreme sacrifice, each doubtless being driven by an irresistible force which he believed almost spiritual guidance. A sad commentary and a frightful indictment of the untamed selfishness of the present-day political leaders of mankind.

The Division was now crouched for its last and greatest effort. Let us try to make a sort of mental picture of the Division as a living thing, a living organization, as it was now prepared to spring forward. Beginning then with what we call the front elements—including perhaps two thousand infantrymen and machine gunmen—these four battalions were side by side, each occupying an area in a line. The area of a battalion in this case was perhaps a thousand meters wide and a thousand to fifteen hundred meters deep. Over each of these areas was distributed a battalion—perhaps two companies, occupying the forward half, and two companies the rearward half; but as one looked at it, if that could be done, from the air and saw

all the men, it would look as if they were more or less evenly distributed over the area shown, occupying the position behind a little rise, but never grouped.

Let us go back through this Divisional area into the Divisional sector. It is about three miles wide at the front and extends back for a distance of more than ten miles to the railhead. As we go back through this area we find first, the second line of battalions—the support battalions nearly a mile in the rear of the first line. Then going back another mile or two we find the reserve battalions. Scattered among these we find groups of artillery ready for action or actually in action. We find first-aid stations, dressing stations, stragglers' posts under control of the military police, for picking up exhausted men, or men who have lost their way, or men who have been shell-shocked or temporarily deranged in their minds. These stragglers' posts collect them, give them hot food, and soon the men are again ready to go to the front. Here we find regimental command posts, brigade command posts, and under such cover as can be found, food depots, ammunition dumps, rolling kitchens, and a little further back we have the field hospitals and the Division Headquarters—the nerve center of the whole Division. As we pass across the area we run across many wires—insulated wires—some lying on the ground and some half in the air. These are the communications—the nerves of the Division—carrying to the various elements and commands encouragements and frequently commendations of the Division Commander. Then as we go on we find great ammunition columns, supply columns, herds of horses carefully scattered on grazing ground. These are the great number of animals, perhaps, eight or nine thousand in the horse transportation of the Division. The guns are now in position and the horses are taken back as much out of artillery fire as possible and given an opportunity to subsist themselves as much as possible on what

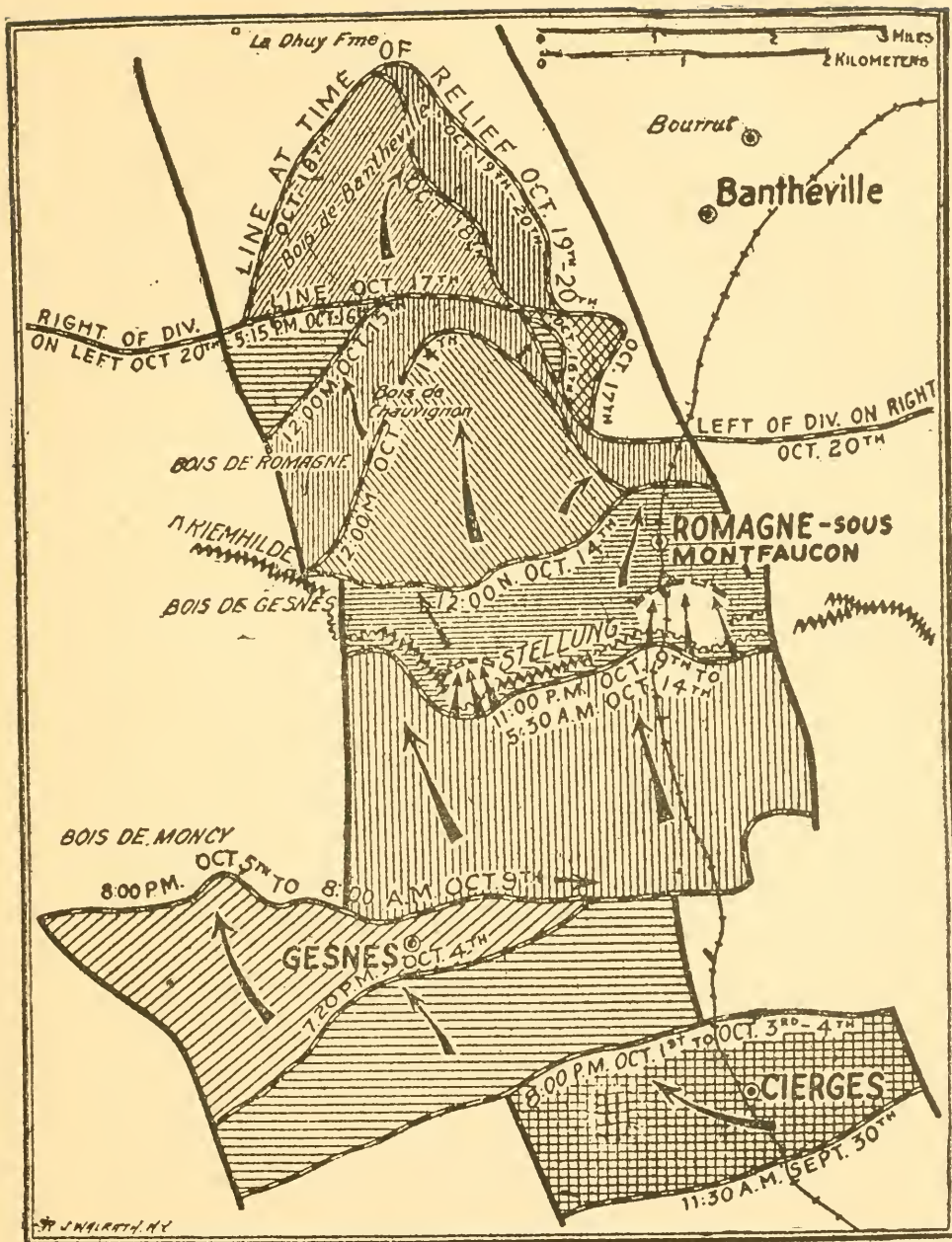
grass they can find. Then we see at every road crossing military police with bands on their arms, who have charge of traffic control to make sure that on one-way roads vehicles pass only in one direction. And scattered through the area from the front to the rear we find groups of signal corps men repairing wires—putting in additional nerves of the Division. We find from the very front to the rear engineer detachments repairing roads and bridges. We find scattered likewise through the whole area sanitary squads of medical men with litters to take care of the sick and wounded. We find a constant stream of wounded going to the rear in ambulances and we see desolation and destruction everywhere, as has already been indicated. Picture then the men forming this Division about ready to make the great assault in cold and rainy October weather. These men had little clothing, no shelter, were covered from head to foot with mud, had been continuously in action under the enemy's heavy fire for two long weeks. Their comrades had melted away until now the companies were less than half strength. The losses among the officers were even greater; yet their Commander still believed them capable of a great effort. He called upon them for this supreme test; and as will shortly be seen they responded with irresistible determination.

It may be asked in passing why a Division is organized in such great depth. Primarily this is necessary to give great and continuous driving power. As the front line elements melt away in battle the next succeeding elements take their places in the front and so on and so on. It is a sort of revolving machine where in turn each succeeding echelon passes over the front line and is thus able to give a new impetus to the forward movement of the great machine.

On the night of October 13 as I went to my headquarters after spending half the night in the front lines, I felt confident that we were going through the next morning and

while I was satisfied, yet I had no desire for sleep. I forgot that it was night. When the artillery started its action actually on time at dawn, and when everything started as planned, I felt a certain amount of relief and in spite of my desire to know what was going on I fell asleep in the midst of the deafening roar of the heavy artillery and continued sleeping until about eight o'clock in the morning. I needed no time to make my toilet, no time to dress. I forgot to eat my breakfast as I had forgotten to eat my supper the night before, went to the place where all reports were received and where the operations map was kept, found that reports were beginning to come in—reports which had in them some of the elements of hope and yet without that definiteness necessary before encouraging reports should be made to the higher command. Gradually, however, came reports from the various parts of the front which, taken together, indicated that progress was being made. The battle order required the left center to go over the top first; the artillery lifted and moved forward off the enemy fortified position there first. The One Hundred Twenty-sixth Infantry followed through and a message was received that it was following the barrage. Another message—that the One Hundred Twenty-seventh Infantry on the left had gone against the heavy wire in the woods and against the steep hills of La Cote Dame Marie and was stopped. Another message—that the right battalion on the extreme right of the sector, a battalion of the One Hundred Twenty-eighth Infantry, had penetrated the line and had advanced behind the barrage as far as the outskirts of Romagne where it was held up, that the Infantry Commander had stopped the barrage in front of that part of the line and had requested artillery fire on the town. I directed the Artillery Commander to place all of his available heavy guns, including two batteries of 8" Howitzers, army artillery, which had been placed under my control.

The roaring of the heavy cannon soon told that these orders were promptly complied with. In the meantime further information was received that the One Hundred Twenty-sixth Infantry in the left center was still following the barrage and was approaching the first objective about one mile north of the main position where the jump-off was made, but that the One Hundred Twenty-seventh Infantry was unable to advance. I suggested to the Brigade Commander that he send additional troops through the gap through which the One Hundred Twenty-sixth Infantry had penetrated and attack La Cote Dame Marie from the east by a flank movement to the left. At 1:50 o'clock I sent the following message to Corps Headquarters: "I believe we will get to our objectives before the day is over. Everything indicates that our men are fighting fine." I received a message from Lieutenant Gotschalk, who had succeeded to the command of the battalion of the One Hundred Twenty-eighth Infantry which had been held up to the south of Romagne, to stop firing on the town of Romagne—that he had succeeded with his battalion in moving around to the left of the town and had formed a line on the north side of it. This I could hardly believe. It was almost too good to be true, but I knew this officer's reports were reliable and gave the necessary instructions to comply with his requests. Things were becoming more cheerful. In the meantime the right center battalion, also of the One Hundred Twenty-eighth Infantry, had succeeded in demolishing the remainder of the enemy's position and was moving forward in its sector. Shortly after this more good news came to the effect that the One Hundred Twenty-sixth Infantry had moved to the left and occupied part of the ridge of La Cote Dame Marie and still a little later that the One Hundred Twenty-seventh Infantry had flanked hill 286, the extreme west end of La Cote Dame Marie, by going into the sector of the Forty-second Division, advancing in



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that sector, and then taking it by a flank movement. The Staff at Headquarters was all smiles by this time. The One Hundred Twenty-sixth Infantry, operating from the right, and the One Hundred Twenty-seventh Infantry, operating from the left, mopped up the ridge known as La Cote Dame Marie. This was an extremely strong position—in fact, it was so strong that a direct assault upon it from the front, for which it was built, would have cost the lives of hundreds and hundreds of men. The taking of this position by a double flank movement was one of the cleverest pieces of work of the entire war. This strong position was taken with a minimum loss and that part of its garrison which did not succeed in escaping was captured in the jaws of this double flank movement. We had now in our possession the entire position which had given me so much anxiety.

The action of the Division—a great mass made up of men, animals, motors, and material—in its slow forward movement seemed almost as one huge, living animal—stalling a little here and there, yet driven forward again as if by a living power actuated by a single huge, muscular body determined to keep on moving obstinately in one particular direction. The Division had in fact become a living machine, an entity which responded to the will of its Commander whose commands as well as words of encouragement and commendation speeded through the nervous system of this huge, living animal, adjusted its various parts, and kept the propellers going; and though it stalled again and again, it never failed to respond until it had before night accomplished more than its allotted task. It had gone beyond its objective and had justified all and more than its Commander had predicted for its day's work in his first message to the higher command.

On the evening of the fourteenth, when I was visiting the brigade commanders and consulting with them as to the

next day's operations, the Commander in Chief, General Pershing, visited our headquarters and placed his finger on the map and said, "I want that place"—the Bois de Chauvignon.

Our Chief of Staff must have had great pleasure in saying to General Pershing, "General, we have that position now, and General Haan has gone forward to see his brigade commanders with a view to driving farther ahead tomorrow morning."

In this operation the Division earned its title, which was later given to it: "The Red Arrow" Division. Perhaps most of you have been told why the barred arrow was adopted as the Division insignia. Here is an example of how the Division made an arrow of itself and shot forward always at the critical moment. This was by no means the only time; it did the same thing in the two other battles in which it fought: the Second Battle of the Marne and the Battle of Juvigny. In the first it arrowed forward and captured the town of Fismes; with the Tenth French Army in the same way it captured the strong position of Juvigny, in both cases sticking its point forward arrow-like and exposing its flanks to get these positions.

The remainder of the work of the Division in this remarkable battle is shown on the Operations Map; note that the "arrowhead" was completed.

Upon arrival at my headquarters at midnight on October 14 I awoke my stenographer, who was quietly sleeping on the floor of my spacious office, and dictated an order, which was sent out by telephone to brigade commanders, to be immediately dispatched to the troops. This order read in part as follows:

I most heartily congratulate every officer and man on the splendid achievements of the day—of the many hard and successful days during three great battles, today marks the high point of accomplished success.

It is the more marked because it was done as a climax after fifteen days' continuous and frequently desperate fighting.

It was for his conduct of this battle that the Division Commander was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

At the close of the battle the following letter was received from the Corps Commander:

The recent long service of the Thirty-second Division in the front line of the Fifth Army Corps has been characterized by such a fine example of soldierly effort that the Corps Commander commends you and your soldiers and officers for it.

Under extremely difficult circumstances, and over a rough, hilly, and wooded terrain, the Division broke through the enemy's strong lines (Kriemhilde Stellung) and reached and took its objectives.

This effort and the result accomplished speak for themselves, but that you and your men may know that the Corps Commander appreciates their exertion, and acknowledges their success, he thanks each one.

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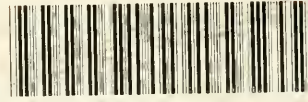
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